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JOAN OF ARC





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# JOAN OF ARC

BY

JOHN O'HAGAN

LATE JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE  
(IRELAND)

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*THE following Essay was contributed by my Husband in the year 1858 to the Atlantis, a periodical established by CARDINAL NEWMAN when Rector of the Catholic University of Ireland. I have thought that it might not be without interest at the present time, when the question of the Beatification of Joan of Arc is under consideration. It is therefore republished in the hope of giving pleasure to some who could not have the opportunity of reading it in its original form.*

FRANCES O'HAGAN.

December 8th, 1892.





## JOAN OF ARC

THE trial of Joan of Arc, at Rouen, lasted in all four months. Unjust in substance, it was conducted with scrupulous adherence to form. *Extant materials for the history of Joan of Arc.*

She was interrogated repeatedly and minutely as to the particulars of her life, and especially as to her supernatural claims. The interrogatories and her answers, taken down in French by the notaries on the spot, were turned into Latin and embodied in the formal record of the trial drawn up shortly after its termination.

Several exemplifications of this record, under the hands and seals of the notaries and the seal of the Bishop of Beauvais, her judge, are in existence. A copy also exists of a great portion of the original minutes of the questions and answers, in French, quite sufficient to testify to the general fidelity of the Latin

version. Twenty years after her death, the tardy justice of King Charles VII. caused him to solicit from Pope Calixtus III. the institution of a process for the revision and reversal of the sentence passed at Rouen. After an examination of the record of the former trial by the Auditor of the Rota, and his report upon it (a paper of singular ability), the Pope issued his brief for the process of revision, and after a long investigation the former sentence was annulled and her good name fully restored.

On this second trial were examined no fewer than 132 witnesses, including her uncle, Durand Laxart, who had been her first confidant, her other surviving relatives, her godfather and godmother, friends who had known her from childhood until she set out upon her journey to seek the king, her attendants upon that journey, the Duke of Alençon, Count Dunois, and others, her fellows in arms, her own chaplain, squire, and page ; lastly, several of the assessors who sat upon her trial at

Rouen, the chief notary by whom her answers were recorded, the friar who attended her on the scaffold, and many others present at her death. These depositions, embodied in the record of the second trial, exist in full. In addition to all this, there remain contemporary accounts of her in considerable number, some of them letters written from the camp, almost in the light of her presence. Surely there are few historic personages, of an epoch a little removed from our own, of whom there are materials of judging so abundant and trustworthy.

Strange to say, with all these means of arriving at the truth, the memory of Joan early passed into, and long remained in, the twilight region of uncertainty and fable.

Almost in her own day, the Burgundian chronicler Monstrelet gave that ungracious and sceptical account of her, filled with the idle inventions of her enemies, which was followed by writer after writer, till it became doubtful what she was—a heroine or a political tool,

*Prevalent  
ignorance  
and uncer-  
tainty re-  
specting her.*

a fanatic or cheat, or that mixture of both which is such a favourite character with the philosophic historian. But it was impossible that this indolent acquiescence in uncertainty could subsist before the quickened spirit of research which has marked our age, or that when French history in all its sources became the chosen field of the labours of the foremost in genius among Frenchmen, their inquiries should not turn to "the only being in humanity and history," says Count Louis de Carne, "but for whom France would have ceased to reckon among nations." \*

But all other labours on the subject of Joan of Arc must yield to the great work of M. Jules Quicherat,† brought out by the *Société de l'Histoire de France*.

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\* *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15th January 1856.

† "Procès de condamnation et de rehabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc dite La Pucelle, publiés pour la première fois d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale, suivis de tous les documens historiques qu'on a pu réunir et accompagnés de notes et d'eclaircissemens." Par Jules Quicherat. Cinq volumes. Paris, 1840-1850.

M. Quicherat has printed in full the entire of the records of both trials. He has collected every account and notice of her to be found either amongst her own contemporaries, or writers of the age immediately succeeding. As a matter of mere editing, this work is beyond all praise. Both the Latin and French of the records are printed with great accuracy, but with a just discrimination; while he has throughout corrected the contracted and semi-barbarous spelling of the Latin, he has left the old French in its original garb. The notes alone must have cost a world of labour. There is not a person or locality mentioned in the text (how obscure soever) as to which they do not supply information which adds to our means of judgment. There is no part of the text throwing light upon another to which our attention is not called by a brief reference. There is also a copious index to the entire work. Lastly, M. Quicherat has added an essay of his own, which he terms *Aperçus Nouveaux*, in which he has strictly confined himself to

*M. Quiche-  
rat's great  
work.*



the new light which the documents published by him throw upon many circumstances of her history. In these documents, at all events, is to be found all that can be known respecting her, and they both bring out her own personal character in the clearest and most definite way, and render the facts of her career as undeniable as any recorded by man.

*Impression  
left by study  
of the docu-  
ments.*

Yet, at the same time, the study of these documents immeasurably deepens the wonder which attends upon her. It has been often remarked, by way of contrast between the works of man and the natural works of God, that minute inspection beholds the beauty of the former vanish in vulgar and unsightly detail, while in the latter it serves but to reveal their inner and perfect harmony. If the same analogy hold in the moral world, in the comparison between human action and impulse on the one hand, and the operation of a divine influence upon the other, we will find it hard to believe that the actions of Joan of Arc hold of nothing higher than earth.



Before speaking of her, however, we must look back to the condition of France for some thirty or forty years before—a period unsurpassed in history for its crime, its distractions, and misery. We must have some measure of the deep need there was of a deliverer—we must see how black and troubled was the night upon which that healing star arose.

*Preliminary  
view of the  
previous  
state of  
France.*

In the reign of Charles V. of France, when the fourteenth century was verging to its decline, France held, as she holds in the nineteenth, the first place amongst European kingdoms. True, she was indeed far from that compact and formidable unity which now marks her, and which, from the rocks of Mont St. Michel to the roots of the Alps (whatever be the strife of parties), makes one sentiment of undivided nationality throb in thirty-six millions of bosoms. She had still all the external attributes of a feudal monarchy, and the lords of her great provinces enjoyed a power never arrogated in England by the haughtiest of the Nevilles or Percys. Yet,

*Decline of  
the first and  
rise of the  
second feud-  
alism.*

although the feudal system was still fully enthroned in the ideas, manners, and jurisprudence of the time, the independent power of the nobility had, during the reign of Charles V., been largely yielding to the power of the crown. The great work of the consolidation of the monarchy was already in progress, in which Louis XI. and Richelieu were afterwards such zealous workmen, and which was crowned and completed by Louis XIV. But in the fourteenth century the idea which was accomplished in the seventeenth, of annihilating the intermediate power of the nobles, and of bringing the central authority of the sovereign to act directly upon all his subjects, would have been held a monstrous outrage upon the constitution of the realm. The increase of the power of the crown, to which we have referred, was brought to pass in a different way—in a way accordant with the spirit of the age. Whenever, by the feudal law of escheat, any of the great fiefs became vacant for want of heirs, or was forfeited for

treason, either the king absorbed it into the domains of the crown, or, more commonly, granted it as an appanage \* to one of his own immediate relatives. When the elder House of Burgundy, for example, became extinct in the reign of King John, the father of Charles V., he granted that duchy to his son, Philip the Bold ; a grant afterwards confirmed by Charles V., thus creating the second and more memorable House of Burgundy. Another of the brothers of Charles V. was Duke of Berri ; a third was Duke of Anjou ; and his wife's brother was Duke of the Bourbonnais ; Normandy had been united to the French crown since the days of Philip Augustus ; the great central provinces were the hereditary domain of the crown ; and lastly, Charles V. had in his own day—he and his glorious servant the Constable Du Guesclin—won back all the conquests which the English under the

\* *Appanage* (*ad panem*) was the provision carved out, either by king or vassal, for a younger son. It always reverted on failure of male heirs. See Du Cange, *Appanagium*, and the 95th chapter of St. Simon's memoirs.

Black Prince had made in the preceding age, leaving them no footing in the kingdom with the exception of the single town of Calais and some petty castles in Aquitaine. Thus the strength of the king and of his family was so great as to leave no power in the realm capable of contending with them. Yet there was in this state of things one manifest danger. So long, no doubt, as the king was personally vigorous and resolute, the power of the great princes round the throne would be likely to remain united and to be his instrument ; but, if the sceptre were to pass into wavering or imbecile hands, was it not to be dreaded that each of these princes would, on the other hand, seek to use the royal authority for his own purposes, and that their contending ambitions would rend one another and the land ?

*Madness of  
Charles VI.,  
Aug.  
1392.*

So it unhappily proved. Charles V., the politic and far-seeing, was no more, and the crown had passed to his son, then a boy. Charles VI, was a prince of fair promise, and

as he matured showed no worse faults than those which belong naturally to youth—a love of pleasure, a love of the pomp and circumstance of war—when, in his three-and-twentieth year that visitation befell him which was the source of so great calamities for France. Being filled with just wrath at a foul and all but successful attempt which had been made to murder his favourite, the Constable Oliver de Clisson, the king put himself at the head of an expedition to punish the culprit and the Duke of Brittany, who had sheltered him. For some days before setting out he had been strange and wayward in his manner, by turns silly and moody; and on the journey he received a great mental shock from a maniac who rushed out as he was passing through the wood of Mans, and seizing his bridle, cried out: “O king, you are betrayed!” The king continued brooding in silence until he passed through the wood and came out upon the plain under the scorching rays of the sun. It was the month of August 1392, a



summer of unexampled heat. One of the pages behind the king, drowsy with the heat, let his lance fall, which struck upon the helmet of his companion. The king heard the clink of steel, and suddenly shrieked out that he was betrayed, and drawing his sword, rode furiously at his followers, and struck down four of them. He then endeavoured to kill his brother, the Duke of Orleans, who was saved from him with difficulty; and after exhausting himself with frantic efforts, he was at length secured, his eyes rolling wildly in his head—he was in a paroxysm of raging madness. From that day till his death, thirty years after, Charles VI. was never permanently restored to reason, though he had many lucid intervals, sometimes lasting for months, during which he mostly showed himself well-intentioned and just, though depressed from the clinging fear of his infirmity, and of course, for all information as to the past, at the mercy of those around him. But what is still stranger is, that during all that time no regular regency

was appointed. All edicts went forth in the king's name, as if he were in full possession of his faculties ; and the royal authority thus lay as prize for whosoever could gain possession of his person.

The Duke of Orleans, the only brother of the king, and the Duke of Burgundy, his uncle, at once arose as the leaders of rival factions, who, in city and country, in open council and secret intrigue, sought by every means to counteract and undermine each other. The Duke of Orleans haughtily asserted his claim as nearest of blood, but the Duke of Burgundy soon acquired the predominance from his mature age and longer experience, as well as from the power which his own great dominions gave him ; for, in addition to the dukedom of Burgundy, he was, in right of his wife, Count of Flanders and Artois, and held under his command the populous cities of the Netherlands, then in the climax of their prosperity, and bursting with commercial wealth. And, in justice to Philip

*Contests of  
the princes of  
the blood.*



of Burgundy, it must be said that in all his administrative acts there was at least some pretence of public good held forth, some endeavour to relieve the condition of the kingdom ; and this, moreover, that, whatever was the animosity of parties, they did not, during his life, break out into open bloodshed. But he died in 1404, just twelve years after the commencement of the king's madness, leaving as his heir his son John, who acquired the surname of the Fearless (*Jean Sans Peur*), and rightly was he so named, for he was without fear alike of God and man. He became the inheritor of his father's immense possessions, the inheritor to the full of his father's ambition, and of far more than his father's passion of factious hate. Towards him the Duke of Orleans did not stoop to show that deference which he had been reluctantly forced to pay his father. Accordingly, with the queen's concurrence, he boldly assumed the powers of regent, and, it must be owned, a model of a bad government it

was—partial, violent, and rapacious. Such was the detestation with which it inspired the Parisians, that they never could be taught to feel just pity or anger for his cruel end. But the Duke of Burgundy little dreamed of surrendering tamely that power in the central government which his father had possessed. He was prepared to appeal to arms. Both parties commenced to make military preparations, and their troops were drawing near and darkening round the capital. But the Queen and the Dukes of Berri and Bourbon, the uncles of the two rivals, interposed, and succeeded in effecting an apparent accommodation. Orleans and Burgundy were reconciled, they swore a solemn peace with one another, they ratified it by joining in the most sacred rites, and the Duke of Orleans promised to dine with the Duke of Burgundy on Sunday, the 18th of November 1407. But that day never dawned for Louis of Orleans. On the Friday before it he had been supping with the queen, when a message arrived from the king,

*Murder of  
the Duke of  
Orleans,  
16th Nov.  
1407.*

desiring his presence. He set out at once, after nightfall of a November evening, upon a mule and with but two attendants, through the dark streets of Paris, when, on passing the Porte Barbette he was suddenly attacked with such violence that his hand was cut off. He cried out that he was the Duke of Orleans. The assailants replied that it was he whom they sought, and tearing him from his mule, they murdered him upon the ground, dashing his brains about the pavement. The message sent to him had been a snare—the assassins were satellites of the Duke of Burgundy, and the murder was that duke's contrivance. He tried at first indeed to conceal his crime; but when the Mayor of Paris came before him, in the presence of the Dukes of Berri and Bourbon, and required permission to search his palace to find the assassins, he turned pale, and avowed to his uncles that he had procured the deed to be done at the instigation, as he said, of the devil. They bade him fly from Paris. He fled, soon to return. The

momentary remorse which he had felt was swept away by the returning flood of pride and evil passion, so soon as he felt himself upon his own territory, surrounded by all the realities of power. He returned to Paris, not in chains as a felon and a murderer, but with a Flemish army at his back, and in the hateful form of arrogant and triumphant crime. In the meantime, the widow of the murdered prince, Valentine, Duchess of Orleans, a daughter of the Duke of Milan, brought her children in her hand to the foot of the king's throne with a passionate cry for justice. The king loved her much, for her tender Italian nature had often watched over and soothed his malady, when his own wife, Isabella of Bavaria, a German, cold and gross, stood estranged and aloof. The poor king mingled his sobs with those of the widowed duchess as he promised that justice which he felt he was impotent to bestow. Impotent indeed! She had to fly from Paris as the Duke of Burgundy entered it with a force which there was

*The Duke of  
Burgundy  
avows and  
justifies his  
crime.*

nothing to resist, avowing and glorying in his crime. He extorted from the king a full and complete pardon ; but something still more disgraceful was to ensue. The circumstances of his crime were peculiarly detestable. The victim was the only brother of his sovereign, his own first cousin, his companion in boyhood, and in early youth his brother in arms, according to the custom of chivalry, when chivalry was ; and he had slain him with infamous treachery, contrary to the faith of a solemn treaty sworn between them. Yet he procured his own hired orator, Jean Petit, a Norman friar, in the face of the University of Paris, to defend and justify that crime, upon the pretext of permissible tyrannicide, in a harangue which is still to be read\*—a mixture of pedantic sophistry, of perverted Scripture and misapplied history, and in which the real faults of the murdered duke are mixed up with incredible calumnies. But it serves to give us some measure of the terror which

\* It is given in full by Monstrelet.

Burgundy inspired, to think that a body like the University of Paris could listen in patience to a doctrine so monstrous—a doctrine which, we have to add, was afterwards condemned and anathematised when that terror was removed.

The Duchess of Orleans, driven from Paris, *Death of the Duchess,* died soon after of a broken heart ; but before her death she summoned round her bed her husband's sons, the young Duke Charles of Orleans, his brothers the Counts of Vertus and Angoulême, and another who was not her son, but who, from his high qualities and his zeal in his father's cause, she loved as hers—one whom we shall hereafter find playing a noble part in the liberation of his country, who was then known as the Bastard of Orleans, but who subsequently acquired and made illustrious the name of Dunois. She exacted from them a pledge never to cease the pursuit of their father's murderers—a pledge but too faithfully fulfilled. The Duke of Orleans, too young to be the leader



*Civil war of  
the Burgun-  
dians and  
Armagnacs.*

of a party, allied himself in marriage with the daughter of the Earl of Armagnac, a Gascon noble of no great territory, but of an active, daring, and unscrupulous character. He at once became the head of the faction of Orleans ; and the civil war which burst out through France became known as the war of the Burgundians and Armagnacs. The details of this miserable war are but a revolting record of blood and rapine. Civil wars are, indeed, proverbially perfidious and inhuman ; but all other civil wars in history might be termed honourable and merciful in comparison with this of the Burgundians and Armagnacs. As it sprang from no contest of principles, from no public cause, but from selfish hate and ambition, so it was carried on without one redeeming or ennobling feature. Yet, without studying the details, it is hardly possible to conceive what the wretched country suffered at the hands of both the factions. The soldiers of Armagnac inspired especial horror. They came trooping from the south, those



ferocious Gascons, pillaging, slaying, cruel for the sake of cruelty, and mingling with it a brutal levity and impiety, putting the peasants to barbarous tortures to discover their hidden hoards. Yet they were almost rivalled by the Flemish troops of Burgundy. They, indeed, did not, like the Gascons, destroy for destruction's sake, but they brought with them their carts and waggons from Flanders, and they swept the French fields and granaries clean, in the spirit of hucksters rather than of soldiers. Again, as we may well conceive, in the suspension of all authority, armed bands of freebooters everywhere arose, who clothed themselves with whatever names suited them, but whose only purpose was plunder. Lastly, the unhappy peasant, whose peaceful labours gave birth to that wealth which was the prize of the combatants, too often driven to despair, flung down the beneficent plough for the destroying sword, and became himself a brigand and marauder. In the words of a contem-

*Its character.*

porary,\* "All France was as the sea, where every one hath as much sovereignty as he hath strength." The metropolis several times changed masters, and each change was marked with massacres and judicial murders; while each party, who for the time had possession of the king, hurled royal edicts against their enemies as rebels and traitors. Five several treaties of peace were made, sworn to, and violated. Yet, the crowning infamy remains. Both parties vied in seeking to purchase the assistance of the common enemy of their country. The Duke of Burgundy was the first to enter into negotiation with Henry IV. of England, but the Earl of Armagnac outbid him. A regular treaty was concluded between the King of England and the Armagnacs, by which, as the price of the military aid which he was to render them, they stipulated to surrender to him all Aquitaine in full sovereignty, and to hold their fiefs in that duchy as his vassals. The death of Henry IV.

\* Alain de Chartres.

alone prevented that treaty from being carried into effect, and owing to a change of circumstances, which was no merit in them, the Armagnacs, who had thus bargained for the dismemberment of France, became in the event the champions of her independence.

Henry V., in the flower of his age and possessed by a devouring ambition, was little disposed to be content with Aquitaine. Regarding France in its bleeding and distracted condition as an easy prey, he asserted a pretension to the crown itself. The grounds of his claim were in the last degree preposterous, involving a denial of the Salic law, the fundamental law of the French monarchy. But the avowed grounds mattered little when he knew, and his adversaries knew, that the sword made title as well as sanction. Henry amused the French with negotiations and offers, until in August 1415 the red cross was on the seas, and Harfleur was besieged by thirty thousand men. This campaign of Henry in France is familiar to all of us,

*Invasion of  
France by  
Henry V. of  
England.*

stamped as it is upon our minds by the grand drama of Shakespeare, perhaps the best of his historical plays—a genuine English epic, in which the higher qualities of his countrymen, their great capacities for action and endurance, are immortally portrayed. Yet this very campaign of Henry is but another example how widely different is the art of victory from that of conquest, and how little the mere winning of battles avails an invader until he establishes an interest in the vitals of the country which he comes to subdue. Cressy and Poitiers, the glories of the preceding age, had passed away as barren of real results as if they had been but the passage of arms at a tournament, and now the still more glorious victory of Agincourt, where the flower of French chivalry fell or were made captives, served but to open to Henry the road to Calais, that his army might embark in safety for England, and two full years elapsed before he invaded France again. The danger of their country and the insolence of Henry's demands had in

*Battle of  
Agincourt  
(1415).*

some degree united the French, and although the Duke of Burgundy held aloof, his eldest son, the young Count of Charolais, had so much of French feeling that he burst into tears at being restrained by his father's command from leading his troops to join the French ranks at Agincourt. But during the two years of respite the fury of faction blazed out afresh. The Count of Armagnac had made himself master of Paris, and as the inhabitants of that city were always strongly Burgundian, he exercised upon them the greatest cruelty, multiplying executions daily, until a terrible retribution came. A sudden revolution overthrew his power and opened the gates to the Duke of Burgundy.

The Armagnacs were seized and flung in multitudes into prison, until, upon some rumours of an army coming to liberate them, they were all torn from their prisons and massacred under circumstances singularly resembling those of September 1792. Amongst the victims who thus perished was

*Massacre of  
the Armag-  
nacs (1418).*

the Earl of Armagnac himself, a man of great wickedness but great capacity, the head and right arm of his party. Burgundy was therefore once more lord of the ascendant.

*Murder of  
the Duke of  
Burgundy  
(1419).*

But John the Fearless was beginning to weary of this long civil butchery. Now on the borders of fifty, his blood was cooling fast, and his conscience was heavy with many crimes. Evil as he had been, he could not see without a pang the English landed once more in Normandy, and city after city falling before them ; and his own advances to Henry were now treated with characteristic insolence. He became therefore sincerely desirous of terminating the civil war, and of reconciling himself with the Armagnacs. That party was greatly broken and scattered. Their bravest captains had fallen at Agincourt. Armagnac was slain, and the Duke of Orleans, who had been taken at Agincourt, was a prisoner in England. They had still, however, one important source of influence in their hands. The Dauphin, the heir of the crown, now a



youth of sixteen, had from his childhood fallen under Armagnac influences, and was passionately devoted to their party. He was now joined with Sir Tanneguy Duchatel and the remaining Armagnac leaders. To him the Duke of Burgundy made his proffers of peace and submission. The bridge of Montereau, upon the Seine, was appointed for their meeting, with all solemn pledges of good faith. Three barriers were erected across the bridge with a gate and lock to each. As the Duke of Burgundy entered the second barrier it was ominously locked behind him, and when he was in the very act of kneeling to the Dauphin, Sir Tanneguy Duchatel struck him in the face with a hatchet, and the other Armagnacs soon completed the murder.

The Dauphin was leaning listlessly upon the barrier when the deed was done. Of actual participation or connivance he must, we think, be acquitted; but he had been trained in an evil school: he was still but a

boy in years, and there was in him a fatal passiveness of character, which led him to accept whatever was done by those around him. In the minds of all men the responsibility rested upon him.

*Its evil results.*

Thus fearfully, after the lapse of twelve years, was the death of Louis of Orleans avenged by a crime equal in treachery, and yet more ominous of ill. It at once annihilated the only hope of a union of Frenchmen against the invader. The Duke of Burgundy's eldest son, now duke, when Count of Charolais, had, as we have seen, wept because he was not amongst the French ranks at Agincourt ; but every thought and feeling were now absorbed in a burning desire of vengeance. He solemnly foreswore allegiance then and thereafter to the perjured Dauphin, and he placed himself, his vassals, and the power of his dukedom, at the feet of Henry of England. The Queen too, Isabella of Bavaria, who had then her unhappy husband wholly in her hands, entered into the league with the Burgundians and the English.

She had conceived for her son one of those unnatural hatreds sometimes, but rarely, seen on the part of mothers ; and she was devoted to the interests of her daughter Catherine, whom Henry V. desired to marry. Within eight months from the murder of the Duke of Burgundy was concluded the treaty of Troyes, <sup>*Treaty of*</sup> perhaps the most ignominious that ever was <sup>*Troyes.*</sup> imposed upon a nation. By that treaty Henry was to marry Catherine ; the title of King of France was to be preserved to Charles VI. during the remainder of his life, but all the substance of power was to be given to Henry, with the title of Regent ; and upon the death of Charles, Henry and his heirs, kings of England, were to remain for ever kings of France. Charles, the Dauphin, was solemnly prescribed, “on account,” says the treaty, “of the horrible and enormous crimes which he has perpetrated in our kingdom of France.” It was agreed that no peace was to be made with him, and that Henry was to exert himself to the uttermost in reducing all the towns,

*Miserable  
state of  
France.*

castles, and forts which yielded obedience to him. We may wonder that the blood of France could have submitted for a single day to such disgrace. But the sufferings of France had surpassed the power of human endurance. Of late years the despairing husbandman had even omitted to cast his seed into the ground. Famine had come in the trail of war, and pestilence and dysentery, as ever, in the wake of famine.\* In the city of Paris alone 80,000 had died in one year, and the very wolves had come to prowl in the streets of the

\* "There appeared nothing but a horrible face, confusion, poverty, desolation, solitariness, and fear. The lean and bare labourers in the country did terrify even thieves themselves, who had nothing left them to spoil but the carcases of those poor miserable creatures wandering up and down like ghosts drawn out of their graves. The least fences and hamlets were fortified by these robbers—English, Burgundians, and French—every one striving to do his worst. All men of war were well agreed to spoil the husbandman and the merchant. Even the cattle accustomed to the larum bell, the sign of the enemy's approach, would run home of themselves, without any guide, by this accustomed misery."—DE SERRES. (See notes to Southey's "Joan of Arc," and Creasy's "Decisive Battles," p. 316.

metropolis. Peace! peace! and some strong ruler who would protect life and goods, had become the cry of all hearts. So a great portion of the French nation seemed disposed to acquiesce in the English rule. Henry for the next two years was active in subduing and punishing with stern severity the remaining cities of the north of France which adhered to the Dauphin. He was full of great designs. He meant France to be the road for him to the subjugation of Italy, and Italy the gateway to the East. But from his conquests and his projects, from his young bride and his newly won realm, he was suddenly summoned. He died in his thirty-fourth year, leaving an infant son the heir of two mighty kingdoms. He was followed to the grave in a month by the unhappy King of France, whose fatal reign came at last to a close.

*Deaths of  
Henry V.  
and Charles  
VI. (1422).*

Henry left an infant the heir of both of his crowns; but as guardian of that infant, and as regent of the realm of France, he left his



brother the Duke of Bedford,\* a prince to the full as brave and politic, and almost as stern as himself, and devoted heart and soul to the maintenance of the English power in France. The Dauphin, on the other hand, was inert, suspicious, and irresolute. Upon his father's death he had assumed the title of King Charles VII. ; but he was more in the condition of a wandering fugitive than a king. The Parisians, who had always been strongly Burgundian, mocked him, and called him King of Bourges ; and his mother, whose monstrous hatred unceasingly pursued him, did not scruple to blast her own name and character in the falsehood which she invented to destroy him, for she gave out that he was not the son of Charles VI. He had made one great attempt, chiefly with his Scottish auxiliaries, under Archibald, Earl of Douglas, against the English, but his forces met a signal overthrow

*Desperate  
condition of  
Charles VII.*

\* Shakespeare's John of Lancaster, the same sober-blooded boy who liked not Falstaff. It is uncertain how the error of calling him *Duke* of Lancaster crept in.

on the field of Verneuil. Destiny seemed to have declared irrevocably against him. North of the Loire—that is, in the greater portion of France proper—the English and Burgundians were complete masters ; and if the provinces of the South still nominally adhered to him, it was more for preserving their own semi-independence, than from any allegiance to the House of Valois. What grasp he had upon the country was diminishing day by day. In the centre of France one great stronghold alone remained true to him—the city of Orleans. Accordingly, the English directed all their force to that city, and laid vigorous siege to it in the autumn of 1428. Dunois *Siege of Orleans (1428).* threw himself into the town, and the Orleanists made a gallant defence ; but the English won the outworks built by the French upon the bridge across the Loire, and they built round the city six strong forts called bastilles, from which they assailed it on every side. Charles sent a force of French and Scots to relieve the city and to intercept a convoy of provisions



coming to the besiegers ; but this force was met by the English general, Sir John Fastolfe, and almost annihilated in the battle of the herrings.\* After this defeat, the fate of Orleans seemed sealed, and the citizens

*Negotiations  
for surren-  
der.*

opened a negotiation for the surrender of the city—not indeed to the English, but, what was in truth the same thing, to the Duke of Burgundy. With the fall of Orleans, Charles would have had no sustainable footing north of the Garonne, nor could he have prolonged the war for any time behind that river. He was now at the castle of Chinon, in Touraine, seeking by the distraction of vulgar pleasures to deaden the sense of his misfortunes. In truth he despaired of himself and of France. Overwhelmed with such a course of disaster, his mother's slander sank into his mind, and he began to doubt whether Providence had not declared against his lineal right, and he meditated a total abandonment of France and

\* The salt fish intended for the English was scattered about the field. Thence the name of the battle.

a retreat into Spain or Scotland. Then would have been accomplished all the aspirations of Henry V., and the heirs of Plantagenet would have been fast enthroned in the seat of Charlemagne :

“ Ruling with large and ample empery  
O'er France and all her almost kingly dukedoms.”

But it was not to be. Providence had not decreed that France, whose part in the drama of history was to be so magnificent—the preceptress of Europe, in the foremost rank of civilisation, of science, and of arms—should have her grand career cut in two, her nationality strangled, and her people dragged at the chariot-wheels of a proud and unsympathetic rival. Nations do indeed, like individuals, accomplish their appointed tasks—some in action and some in suffering ; and perhaps our own country in her subjection has fulfilled as providential a mission as any other people in their glory. But the destiny reserved for France was different. In another hundred years from the time of which we

speaking came the great revolt against the Church, in which France, humanly speaking, held the balance, and it was not in the designs of Providence that she should be in that hour the servant of England. The cause of France, in all human calculation, was lost ; but it is when human efforts and human foresight are most at fault that the superhuman ways of God seem most wonderful in their simplicity and might.

*Belief of the  
people in a  
coming de-  
liverer.*

From the narrative which we have gone through, we might fancy that all sense of religion, all thought of the laws of God, were extinguished in France, and that the nation was steeped in impiety and crime ; but it was far from being so. There had been indeed dreadful wickedness, dreadfully chastised ; but it is not from the baseness of courtiers or the ferocity of soldiers that we are to judge the great body of the people. The peasantry of France remained, as they still remain at this day, faithful and devout, and there had even sprung up in their great

misery, a certain mystic tendency, a persuasion that God would in some unforeseen way redeem and relieve them. This belief had taken definite form, and a prophecy was current, that France, ruined by a woman, would be saved by a woman, and that a virgin from the Marches of Lorraine would be the saviour of the land! \* So, when Charles VII., in the Lent of 1429, was lying in his castle of Chinon, dissolute and desponding, there came a floating murmur to his ear, growing daily stronger, that the destined deliverer was at hand; till at length it was announced to him that a maiden in man's garb sought his presence, who declared that she was commissioned by Heaven to raise the siege of Orleans, and to seat him upon the throne of France. That maiden was Joan of Arc.

She was then just seventeen years of age. *Birth of Joan.*

\* "Prophetisatum fuit quod Francia per mulierem deperderetur et per unam virginem de Marchiis Lotharingiæ restauraretur."—"Procès," vol. ii. p. 447.

She was born on the day of the Epiphany, 1412.\* Her parents, Jacques d'Arc and Isabelle Rommée, were peasants of the village of Domremy, in the valley of the Meuse. Across the river, at a little distance, arose the hills which were the border-land of Lorraine. By some unexplained singularity, the inhabitants of this valley, though surrounded on every side by English and Burgundian garrisons, and separated by eighty leagues of hostile country from the provinces held by Charles VII., had preserved their fidelity to the House of Valois. The village boys of Domremy often fought the boys of the neighbouring villages in this quarrel, and Joan in her childhood frequently saw them return bleeding from their combats.† The

*Fidelity of  
Domremy to  
the House of  
Valois.*

\* Quicherat, vol. v. p. 115.

† "Interrogata si unquam fuit cum parvis pueris qui pugnabant pro parte illa quam tenebat, respondit quod non, unde habeat memoriam, sed bene vidit quod quidam illorum de villa de Domremy qui pugnaverant contra illos de Maxey inde aliquando veniebant bene læsi et cruentati."—"Procès," vol. i. p. 66.

cottage of Joan's father was close to the village church, and not far was that fairy tree of which use was afterwards made in vainly trying to charge Joan with superstition—a spreading beech, round which the children danced, and upon whose branches they hung their chaplets to our Lady of Domremy. She herself was simply and well brought up; taught her *Pater*, *Ave*, and *Credo*; taught to spin and sew, so that she said long afterwards that she did not fear to meet any woman in Rouen in sewing and spinning.\*

*Her childhood.*

She attended almost wholly to the house, but rarely going to the fields to keep her father's sheep.† In her childhood she was remarked for a fervent yet grave and simple piety, taking especial delight to hear the

\* "Interrogata utrum in juventute didicerit aliquam artem, dixit quod sic; ad suendum pannos lineos et nendum: nec timebat mulierem Rothomagensem de nendo et suendo."—"Procès," vol. i. p. 51.

† "Dum esset in domo patris, vacabat circa negotia familiaria domus nec ibat ad campos cum ovibus et aliis animalibus."—"Procès," vol. i. p. 54.



*Commence-  
ment of her  
visions in her  
thirteenth  
year.*

church bells ring.\* So she grew up until, in her thirteenth year, one summer noon, in her father's garden, she heard a voice addressing her on her right hand, towards the church, and she saw at the same time a bright light. She was filled with a great fear. The voice exhorted her to personal goodness, and told her to frequent the church, and that she would thereafter have to go into France.† Soon after, she commenced to see visions of angels and saints. St. Michael was the first that appeared to her, and he told her that St. Catherine and St. Margaret would come to her, and that she should act through their

\* The sexton of Domremy tells us how she promised to give him wool for diligence in ringing.

† "Confessa fuit quod dum esset ætatis XIII. annorum ipsa habuit vocem a Deo pro se juvando ad gubernandum. Et primâ vice habuit magnum timorem. Et venit illa vox quasi horâ meridianâ, tempore æstivo, in horto patris sui, et ipsa Johanna jejunaverat die præcedenti. Audivitque vocem a dextro latere versus ecclesiam. Et raro audit eam sine claritate. Illa vox docuit se bene regere, frequentare ecclesiam, et eidem Johannæ dixit necessarium esse quod ipsa Johanna veniret in Franciam."—"Procès," vol. i. p. 52.



counsel, for that they were ordained by God to guide and counsel her in that which she was to do, and that she was to place faith in them, for this was by the command of God.\*

St. Catherine and St. Margaret visited her, and to them she made a solemn vow of virginity. *She makes a vow of virginity.*

These visions continued from time to time for four years, during which Joan pondered them in her heart, but never spoke of them to any human being. No change was observed in her, except her increasing piety and self-denial. Her charity to the poor especially was extraordinary. She was known to lie upon the floor that she might give them her own bed. And this great affection for the poor was a trait which marked her afterwards in the days of her greatest glory. In the beginning of the year 1429, her voices became more urgent and

\* "Et dixit ultra quod Sanctus Michael quando venit ad eam dixit sibi quod Sanctæ Catherina et Margarita venirent ad ipsam, et quod ipsa ageret per consilium ipsarum quæ erant ordinatæ pro eam conducendo et ei consulendo in eo quod haberet agere: et quod hoc erat per præceptum Dei."—"Procès," vol. 1, p. 170.

specific. They told her that the time was now come—that she had been chosen by God to deliver the kingdom of France from its enemies, and that she was to make her way to the king at Chinon, and demand from him troops to raise the siege of Orleans.

“But how,” said she, “my lord, can I do that? for I am a poor maiden, knowing neither how to ride nor to command in war.”\*

*She is told to  
communicate  
with De  
Baudricourt.*

Her voices told her to communicate with Sir Robert de Baudricourt, captain of the neighbouring town of Vaucouleurs, and that he would give her an escort to conduct her to the king. She opened herself first to her uncle, named Durand Laxart,† and implored of him to speak to De Baudricourt. She told no other of her family, and yet a sense of something uncommon commenced to spread respecting her. Her father dreamed that he had seen her depart from his house accom-

\* “Quod erat una pauper filia quæ nesciret equitare nec ducere guerram.”—“Procès,” vol. i. p. 53.

† See his evidence, “Procès,” vol. ii. p. 444.

panied by men at arms, and he declared that if he thought such a thing possible, he would drown her with his own hands ; \* and a plan was even devised for fixing her at home. A young man of the village averred that she had promised him marriage, and (evidently with her parent's connivance) summoned her to the bishop's court at Toul. She attended, and put an end at once to the pretence. That recourse was had at all to such a device, shows what solicitations to marriage she must have resisted. Her uncle at length brought her with him to Vaucouleurs, and went himself to convey her message to De Baudricourt. The old knight burst into incredulous laughter, and told her uncle to bring her home and punish her. But when Joan herself made her way to him, her fervent convictions could not fail to work upon him. He felt it was something more than natural, and his first thought was to have her exorcised. To this ceremony she joyfully submitted, kissing the priest's

*His reception  
of her.*

\* "Procès," vol. i. p. 132.

stole when it was laid upon her. De Baudricourt then wrote about the matter to the king, and in the meantime sent her to Nancy to the Duke of Lorraine. That duke, who was prostrated by sickness, hearing a rumour of her supernatural claims, desired to see her, and asked her about his malady; but she answered at once that she was a simple girl—that she had no other mission than to give back the kingdom of France to the dauphin, and that she had neither knowledge nor power in the affairs of other princes. When she returned from Nancy to Vaucouleurs, Robert de Baudricourt would no longer oppose her departure, and two young men, Jean de Metz and Bertrand de Poulengy, who had been fired and subdued by her words, proffered themselves as her guides, putting their hands in hers (the feudal symbol of allegiance) and swearing to lead her to the king. Then Joan, in obedience to the command of her voices, abandoned her woman's dress, her peasant's russet gown, and put on that male attire to

which she clung so perseveringly, and which, about to take part, as she was, with men in camps and war, was counselled, as she herself insisted, by every dictate of prudence.\*

Till her departure was accomplished Joan knew no rest. "She seemed straitened, like a woman," says one of the witnesses, "who expects her time."† At length she set out with her guides and their servants, and bade farewell to the valley of the Meuse, never to look on its familiar waters more, though she beheld the mightier Loire and Seine red with her own victories. The little company who thus left a nameless border village to confront the power of England, to rescue beleaguered

*She sets out  
from Vau-  
couleurs.*

\* Minute details as to this dress are given by Jean de Metz and Bertrand de Poulengy in their evidence on the trial of revision: "Ipsa dimisit suas vestes mulieris rubei coloris et fecerunt sibi fieri tunicam et vestimenta hominis" (Poulengy, vol. ii. p. 457). It is evident that it was designed with the view of protecting her innocence: "Portabat caligas ligatas multis ligis fortiter colligatis" (vol. iii. p. 147).

† "Et erat tempus sibi grave ac si esset mulier præg-nans."—CATHERINE DE ROYER. "Procès," vol. ii, p. 447.



cities, to enthrone dynasties, and to change the course of European history for ever, were six in all. Vaucouleurs was upwards of a hundred leagues from Chinon, and the road was full of English and Burgundian soldiers. Yet they passed in perfect safety. Joan rode like a man-at-arms, calm, but elate and confident, sorrowing only that they were obliged to keep away from the churches and from hearing Mass. Yet she stopped for a time at Fierbois, praying devoutly in the church of St. Catherine, and from that town she sent to Charles to announce her coming. On the twelfth day they reached Chinon. Charles was most reluctant to receive her. His own nature was cold and eminently distrustful, and his immediate advisers were men of crooked policy, to whom everything enthusiastic was hateful. But the popular fervour was now so great that he was compelled to yield. He received her in the evening in the great hall of his castle at Chinon, which was lit with fifty torches. He was surrounded by many

*Her reception  
by Charles.*

lords and by more than three hundred knights. The king hid himself on purpose amongst his courtiers, yet she walked direct to him and embraced his knees. He said he was not the king. "Ah, gentle dauphin," said she, "my name is Joan the Maid. The King of Heaven has sent to you by me, that you will be crowned and consecrated in the city of Rheims, and that you will be lieutenant of the King of Heaven, who is King of France." The king still looked coldly upon her, when she added, in a low voice, a sentence by which he was thunderstruck. We mentioned that Charles in his profound discouragement had doubted of his own legitimacy; and he had one day fervently prayed to God to make him in some way know with certainty if he were of the blood of the kings of France, and if so to deign to preserve his crown, but if he were not, to permit him to escape into Spain or Scotland. Of this prayer, of these mental doubts, no human being knew.

Now, when Joan saw that he still mis-



*She tells him  
of his secret  
prayer.*

trusted her, she said to him : " I come to tell you, on the part of my Lord (Messire) that you are true heir of France and son of the king, and I will lead you to Rheims to be consecrated ; " and she added the particulars of his prayer.\* He no longer thought of rejecting her, but before accepting her aid, he put her through another ordeal, for which he cannot be censured : he sent her to Poitiers to be examined by the college of ecclesiastics there, for the supernatural might spring from an evil source, and the wicked spirit might have clothed himself as an angel of light. She was there for three weeks, closely examined and sifted as to every particular of her life and

*Her examination at  
Poitiers.*

\* Alain Chartier, the secretary of Charles, mentions in a letter written by him shortly afterwards (July 1429), that what she said privately to the king no one knew, but that every one saw the change which she wrought in him : " Quid locuta sit, nemo est qui sciat illud, tamen manifestissimum est regem velut Spiritu non mediocri fuisse alacritate perfusum." And Charles long afterwards confessed that she told him distinctly of his secret prayer, and the place and circumstances under which it was made.—" Procès," vol. ii. p. 133.

her revelations, and she answered always with perfect simplicity and unwavering consistency.\* One of the objections raised to her was, that if God wished to deliver the kingdom of France, He could do it without soldiers.

"Ah, my God," she said, "the men-at-arms will fight, and God will give them the victory;" and when asked how she hoped to be believed without a sign, she said she was not come to Poitiers to do signs or miracles, that her sign would be to raise the siege of Orleans. "Give me," she said, "men-at-arms, few or many, and I will go."

They decided at last that the King might lawfully use her services.† So he gave her a suit of white armour, and the Duke of

*The king  
permitted to  
accept her  
services.*

\* The depositions at Poitiers are unhappily lost, and appear to have been so at the time of the Cause of Revision; all that is known of them is from the memory of those who were present. Joan upon her trial constantly refers to them.

† "Quod in eâdem nihil invenerant fidei Catholicæ contrarium et quod, attentâ necessitate, rex de eâdem se juvare poterit."—*Evidence of the Duke of Alençon*, vol. iii. p. 93.

Alençon bestowed upon her a black war-horse, but she still wanted a banner and a sword. For the sword she bade them send to the town of Fierbois, and in the Church of St. Catherine to dig inside the altar, and they would find underground, though half corroded with rust, a large sword with five crosses marked upon the blade. The *curé* of Fierbois was written to, an armourer of Tours was sent to make the excavations, and the sword was found just where she had indicated, and in such a way as to exclude the possibility of fraud. Her banner she had made according to the commands which she received from her voices. On it were painted the images of our Saviour holding the world in His hand, and of the Blessed Virgin. Beneath them were a crown and the fleur-de-lis, the golden lilies of France, all wrought upon white linen, with a silken fringe. There were inscribed upon it the words JESUS + MARIA. When Joan received the banner in her hands, her rapture knew no bounds, and to the last she

*Her banner  
and sword.*

loved it with extreme attachment. She rode round the camp amid a storm of acclamations. She had just completed her seventeenth year; of middle stature; her figure robust and agile, with black hair and handsome features; not the Greek ideal of beauty which sculpture has since bestowed upon her, but a bright face of peasant comeliness.\* Her deportment on horseback and in arms was a wonder to see. Her voice was gentle and womanly.† She spoke little, but with what impressiveness we have her own recorded words to tell. "It seems like a divine thing," wrote the young Counts of Laval shortly after, "to look upon her and to hear her."‡ She bore her harness, says the Duke of Alençon, as knightly as if

*Her form and features.*

\* "Erat brevī quidem staturā, rusticanā facie et nigro capillo, et toto corpore prævalida" (vol. iv. p. 523). "Competentis est elegantiae, virilem sibi vindicat gestum."—*Letter of Perceval de Boulainvillers to the Duke of Milan*, written 21st June 1429. Quicherat, vol. v. p. 120.

† "Vocem mulieris habet ad instar gracilem."—*Letter of Perceval de Boulainvillers. Ibid.*

‡ In a letter to their mother: "Et semble chose toute divine de son faict, et de la voir et de l'ouyr" (vol. v. p. 107).

she had done no other thing in all her life. The king put her at the head of the relieving force to march to Orleans. Her first act of command was to banish from the camp all women of evil life, and to make every soldier go to confession and communion. Think of it! Those old warriors of the Armagnacs, who but a few years before, in the sack of Soissons, had committed horrors of sacrilege which the pen almost refuses to write, became like little children in her hands. The past, with all its guilt and unutterable misery, was forgotten. With consciences purified—with hearts bathed anew in faith and hope—with faces radiant with anticipated triumph, they marched under the visible blessing of Heaven to combat in the noblest of causes.

*She sets out  
with the re-  
lieving force  
for Orleans.*

There is still extant in the archives of Brussels the transcript of a letter written by one who saw her at that time before the relief of Orleans—viz., the 12th of April 1429—and who relates her prophecy that she would be wounded there, but not mortally; a prophecy

exactly fulfilled. The French captains practised a deceit on Joan, and led her and the army to Orleans by Sologne, on the left bank, instead of, as she desired and commanded, right through the ranks of the English.

Dunois came forth from the city to meet her. He himself has described this first interview: "'Are you,' said she, 'the Bastard of Orleans?'" who answered that he was, and that he rejoiced at her coming. 'Is it you,' said she, 'who have given the advice to come by this side, and who have hindered me from going directly where Talbot and the English are?'" To which the deponent answered that others wiser than he had believed that counsel the surest. Then Joan replied: 'In the name of God, the counsel of our Lord is surer and wiser than yours. You thought to deceive me, and you have deceived yourselves; for I bring to you the best succour that has been ever given to any city, since it is the succour of the King of Heaven. It does not come from me; it



has been sent to you at the prayers of St. Louis and St. Charlemagne; God hath had pity on the town of Orleans.' And the deponent says, besides, that the winds, which till then had been contrary and hindered the transport of provisions, suddenly changed and became favourable. The boats immediately set out with full sail and arrived in spite of the English guns. From this moment the deponent was of good hope, and besought Joan to enter into Orleans, where her presence was so much desired. From all these circumstances it appears to deponent that these things came from God rather than man." \*

She rode by the side of Dunois into the city, and she was received by the people as an angel from Heaven. The attacks upon the English works commenced immediately.† The English fought resolutely, as always, but

\* Evidence of Count Dunois, vol. iii. p. 6.

† An able and interesting account of the details of the siege and deliverance of Orleans will be found in Professor Creasy's "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World," p. 304.



the French were in such a state of exalted enthusiasm that it was not in mortal valour to resist them. Joan herself never struck with the sword, but she rode foremost, banner in hand, into the ranks of the enemies. Afterwards, upon her trial she told her simple secret: "I said to the soldiers, enter boldly among the English, and I myself entered boldly." Bastille after bastille of the besiegers was captured, and in ten days from the time when she set foot within the city, that siege which had lasted eight months was at an end. Talbot and Suffolk broke up *The siege is raised.* their camp and retired to the north. She peremptorily forbade any pursuit. "This day," she said, "is Sunday; let us go and thank God." And causing a great altar to be erected in the plain before the city, she had a Mass of thanksgiving offered for their deliverance in the sight of all the people. Till then Joan was known as La Pucelle (The Maid), but her name became then imperishably linked with the city she had saved, and she

was thenceforth for all time the Maid of Orleans.

How prodigious was the effect of this blow we may well conceive. Neither nation ascribed it to human arm; but, while the French exulted in the manifest help of God, the English, in their hate and fear, called it witchcraft and the work of the Devil. "The courage of the soldiers was shaken," wrote the Duke of Bedford, "by lack of sadde beleewe (want of serious faith) and unlawful doubt they had of a disciple and limb of the fiend called The Pucelle, who used false enchantments and sorcery."\*

*The indeci-  
sion of  
Charles.*

But what is astounding is, that in this tide and flood of victory Charles and his advisers returned once more to their timid counsels. They wished not to hazard what they had won, and they sought to confine themselves to a defensive warfare on the Loire, which meant, in truth, to give the enemy time to recover from their panic and to come back

\* Rymer's "Foedera," vol. x. p. 403.

recruited in heart and strength. Joan spoke boldly what her vioces told her was to be done. Until King Charles VII. had been crowned at Rheims, his title was but half consecrated in the eyes of his subjects. She told the king that they should march to Rheims for his coronation. Rheims was 150 miles from Orleans. The intermediate country was entirely in the hands of the enemy, bristling with strong places, and traversed by three deep rivers. Yet once more the fervour of the people's faith overpowered the prudence of the courtiers, and the expedition to Rheims set forth. It promised to occupy months of siege and battle, and it was like a long triumphal march. The Earl of Suffolk had thrown himself into Jargeau, the first town upon the line of way. It was at once stormed and captured. When Joan saw the Duke of Alençon hesitate to commence the assault, she said: "Ah, gentle duke, are you afraid? Do you not know that I have promised to

*The march  
to Rheims.*

*Capture of  
Jargeau.*

your wife to bring you home sound and safe ? ”

*Battle of  
Patay.*

The English had still an army in the field under the command of Lord Talbot, and they met the French at Patay. But the time was signally reversed when 200 Englishmen could beat 400 Frenchmen. It was now, as Dunois said, 200 French who could put to flight 400 English. The English soldiers felt the omen of evil upon them. Their hearts sank and their arms were paralysed when they saw the gleamings of that white panoply and the waving of that banner which was the presage of victory to France, of dismay and discomfiture to them. The English army were scattered at Patay, and the French advanced

*Capture of  
Troyes.*

to Troyes, the capital of Champagne. Once more the cold fit seized the French leaders. How could they, without machines or siege artillery, take so strong a place ? They seriously thought of breaking up and returning to Orleans. Joan implored of them to wait for three days. “ We would gladly,” said

they, "wait six." "Six days!" said she; "I tell you we will be in the city to-morrow." And the next morning the city capitulated without a blow. The road was now open to Rheims. They entered on the 16th of July 1429, and on the following Sunday Charles was duly crowned by the Archbishop of Rheims according to the ancient rite, and anointed with the sacred oil which St. Remy had brought from heaven 900 years before for the coronation of Clovis.

*Coronation of  
Charles at  
Rheims, 17th  
of July  
1429.*

When the rite was finished, Joan flung herself before the king, and embraced his knees, weeping: "Oh gentle king!" she said, "now is accomplished what I told you God would do—that I should raise the siege of Orleans, and lead you into your city of Rheims, to receive your holy consecration, showing you are true king." She rejoiced beyond measure in the joy which she saw around her. At Crepy, on their way homeward, she said to the Archbishop of Rheims: "Behold a good people, nor have I anywhere seen any

people rejoice so much at the return of so noble a king. Would I could be so happy, when I finish my days, to be buried in this land." "O Joan," said the archbishop to her, "in what place have you a hope of dying!" "Where it pleases God," she said, "for of the place or hour I know no more than you, and would that it pleased God, my Creator, that I could now depart, laying aside my arms, and returning to serve my father and mother in keeping their sheep with my sister and my brothers, who would much rejoice to see me."\*

*Was her mission then finished?*

*Was the mission of Joan finished at Rheims?*

We find it so stated in almost all histories; and a misreading of her conversation with the archbishop led even to the statement that she had implored King Charles to permit her, now when her task was done, to return and keep her father's sheep. Yet nothing has been proved more clearly from the answers of Joan herself upon her trial, than that she did not

\* Evidence of Dunois, vol. iii. p. 14.



believe her mission to have then terminated. She was sent, she says, and says it again and again, to drive the last of the English out of France ; and she averred that if she were once more in armour in the French camp, it would be one of the greatest blessings that could befall France. And again, a few days before her death, when urged to resume her woman's dress, she said : " When I shall have accomplished that for which I was sent from God, I will take the dress of a woman." \*

Yet, in one sense her mission *did* end at Rheims. The faith of the people still followed her, but her enemies—not the English, but those in the heart of the court of Charles—began to be too powerful for her. We may, indeed, conceive what a hoard of envy and malice was gathering in the hearts of those hardened politicians at seeing themselves superseded by a peasant girl. They, accustomed to dark and tortuous ways, could not

*Intrigues  
against her.*

\* " Quando ego fecero illud propter quod ego sum missa ex parte Dei accipiam habitum muliebrem " (vol. i. p. 394).

comprehend or coalesce with the divine simplicity of her designs and means. A successful intrigue was formed against her.\* It was resolved to keep her still in the camp as a name and a figure, but to take from her all power, all voice in the direction of affairs. So accordingly it was done. The French in August besieged Paris, then in the hands of the English. The siege was undertaken contrary to her advice ; she took part, nevertheless, in the assault with her accustomed fearlessness, and was wounded. The assault was repelled, but Joan, rising from her wound, said that she was assured that if the assault were renewed they would win the city. In answer to that exhortation, they put her by force upon a horse, and sent her back to the camp while a retreat was sounded. And then

\* "George de la Tremouille," says M. Quicherat, "endured the Pucelle, but it was in order to labour for the ruin of her influence ; a work which he directed with infernal perfidy, making the odium of its execution fall as far as possible on his colleagues."

they cast the entire responsibility of the failure upon her.

What pangs must that poor heart have suffered during that weary time, belied and discredited, burning with love of France, and made impotent to save her! She still, however, fought as usual, and when the Burgundians laid siege to the town of Compiègne, on the Oise, she threw herself into it to defend it. That very day she headed a sally against the besiegers; but her followers retired, and she, who was ever in the front, was left alone. She was surrounded and captured by the Bastard of Vendonne,\* a knight in the service of John of Luxembourg. It was the 23rd of May 1430, a little more than a year from the deliverance of Orleans.

Her ways and habits during the year she was in arms are attested by a multitude of witnesses. Dunois and the Duke of Alençon

*She is taken  
prisoner at  
Compiègne.*

*Her habits  
while in  
arms.*

\* Not Vendôme, as often written. Her captor was a simple knight, in no way connected with the blood of Bourbon.

bear testimony to what they term her extraordinary talents for war,\* and to her perfect fearlessness in action ; but in all other things she was the most simple of creatures. She wept when she first saw men slain in battle, to think that they should have died without confession.† She wept at the abominable epithets which the English heaped upon her ; but she was without a trace of vindictiveness. “ Ah, Glacidas, Glacidas ! ” she said to Sir William Glasdale at Orleans, “ you have called me foul names ; but I have pity upon your soul and the souls of your men. Surrender to the King of Heaven ! ” ‡ And she was

\* “ Especially,” says the latter, “ in the management of artillery. She showed,” he adds, “ the skill of a leader of thirty years’ experience ” (vol. iii. p. 100).

† Vol. iii. p. 106.

‡ Contrast this with the stern Amazon drawn by Schiller. See especially the scene with Montgomery, in which Joan is made to say that he might as well look for mercy from the lioness or spotted tigress, as beg his life from her (“ Jungfrau von Orleans,” act ii. sc. 7). Indeed, the whole play as a work of art is quite unworthy of the great author of the “ Piccolomini.”

once seen, resting the head of a wounded Englishman on her lap, comforting and consoling him.\* In her diet she was abstemious in the extreme, rarely eating until evening, and then, for the most part, only of bread and water, sometimes mixed with wine. In the field she slept in her armour, but when she came into a city, she always sought out some honourable matron, under whose protection she placed herself; and there is wonderful evidence of the atmosphere of purity which she diffused around her, her very presence banishing from men's hearts all evil thoughts and wishes.† Her conversation, when it was not of the war, was entirely of religion. She confessed often, and received communion twice in the week.‡ “And it was her custom,” says Dunois, “at twilight every day, to retire to the church and make the bells be rung for half an hour, and she gathered the mendicant

\* Vol. iii. p. 72.

† See the evidence of Jean of Metz, vol. ii. p. 438, and of Dunois, vol. iii. p. 15.

‡ D'Alençon, vol. iii. p. 100.

religious who followed the king's army, and she put herself in prayer, and made them sing an antiphon of the blessed Mother of God.\* From presumption, as from superstition, she was entirely free. When women brought her crosses and chaplets to bless, she said: "How can I bless them? Your own blessing would be as good as mine."† She ever yearned after the union of Frenchmen, and on the very day of the coronation at Rheims she dictated a touching letter to the Duke of Burgundy, conjuring him to be no longer an enemy to his country, but to let the past be forgiven in Christian peace. But of negotiations with the English she was supremely impatient. "I tell you," she often repeated, "there is no peace to be made with the English, except at point of lance."‡

*Her anxiety  
for union  
among  
Frenchmen.*

*The English  
are resolved  
to obtain  
possession of  
her;*

She was now a prisoner in the hands of John of Luxembourg, a vassal of the Duke of Burgundy. But from the moment of her

\* Dunois, vol. iii. p. 14.

† Vol. iii. p. 86.

‡ "Nisi cum buto lanceæ" (vol. i. p. 233).



capture the English set their hearts upon obtaining possession of her. That deep pride of character which was perhaps a large element in their success had its darker expressions. It rendered them intolerant of the slightest defeat or check, and engendered towards any enemy who might inflict it upon them a hatred stopping short at no calumny and no cruelty. Their hatred of Joan was something wholly indescribable, and from the beginning they had spread the most abominable slander concerning her. They were resolved upon her destruction—not merely upon killing her, for that would avail little while her memory remained a beacon for France, but upon blasting her name and its influence, stamping upon her for ever the brand of evil, and extinguishing in infamy that light which had been of such disastrous omen to them. They designed to have her condemned by an ecclesiastical tribunal as a blasphemer and a sorcerer. In their proceedings to effect this end two circumstances, curiously characteristic of the nation,

*and to have  
her tried for  
sorcery.*

appear : first, the accomplishing their purpose under colour and in form of strict law ; and secondly, their using as their instruments natives of the country whose subjugation they sought.

*Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais.*

Their chief instrument in this case was Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais. That he acted with deliberate iniquity it is by no mean necessary for us to believe. There are many contemporary testimonies highly favourable to him, and in the very brief of Pope Calixtus III. by which the process of revision was instituted, he is called *vir bonæ memoriæ*. But all his words and acts throughout this business show that his judgment was radically perverted by faction and ambition. He had been always a strong partisan of the Burgundians, had attained the high dignities of rector and conservator of the privileges of the University of Paris (the most Burgundian of corporations), and was held in great esteem by Philip, Duke of Burgundy, who bestowed upon him the bishopric of Beauvais. When

*His strong partisan feelings.*

Beauvais fell into the hands of Charles VII., he was driven from the possession of his See, and took refuge in England with the Cardinal of Winchester (the Cardinal Beaufort of Shakespeare), who took him wholly under his patronage. He became a devoted adherent of the house of Lancaster, and the English promised him the archbishopric of Rouen.\* Thus all his feelings, his resentment for the past, his hopes for the future, were bound up with the maintenance of the English power in France, and he naturally regarded with abhorrence whatsoever threatened that power. But not only were the feelings of the Bishop enlisted against Joan; that sentiment was strongly shared by all the ecclesiastics in the English or Burgundian interest, and, foremost among them, by the University of Paris. The party spirit which divided the nation ran high, as we may conceive, among the clergy too.

\* See this promise recorded in the "Proceedings of the Privy Council of England," published by Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, vol. iv. p. 10.

And when the College at Poitiers absolved her from the taint of sorcery, and declared that Charles might lawfully use her services, the opposite party were all the more loud in pronouncing her a witch : to this their position forced them ; for if she were sent from God, what was to be thought of their cause ? So that, not alone with the English rulers and soldiers, but with a large body of French ecclesiastics, and amongst them many learned and able men, the belief in the sorcery of Joan acquired almost the strength of a first principle. We should bear this always in mind in judging of the tragedy that followed.

*Requisitions  
for the sur-  
render of  
Joan.*

The news of the capture of Joan had hardly time to reach Paris when the vicar in that city of the inquisitor of France, at the instance of the University, despatched a letter to the Duke of Burgundy (26th May 1430) requiring Joan to be delivered up, that she might be brought to Paris and tried there by the Church. This summons never was proceeded on, for the English were reluctant that she should be

tried in Paris, which, though deeply Burgundian as we have seen, was not so entirely under their control as their provinces in the north. They sought a pretext for getting her into their own hands, and in this a singular accident favoured them. It so happened that the place where Joan was taken, outside Compiègne, was just on the borders of the diocese of Beauvais. This circumstance was made the foundation for a claim by the bishop, who was then at Rouen, of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over her. He sent a requisition to the Duke of Burgundy and John of Luxembourg, demanding that she should be delivered up to him to be tried. This requisition was aided by letters from the University of Paris, couched in terms which vividly express the terror that she inspired. After speaking of the possibility of her escape being effected, they go on to say: "For such great damage to holy faith, such enormous peril and loss for the whole state of the kingdom, have not happened in the memory of man, as would

happen if she escaped by such accursed ways without due reparation," and they say it would be still worse if she were liberated "for money or ransom." \*

*She is demanded on the part of the King of England as suzerain,*

But John of Luxembourg by no means thought of parting with his prisoner simply upon these requisitions. In those days an important prisoner of war was a very valuable piece of booty, and a high ransom might naturally be expected for Joan. So another machinery was resorted to. According to the feudal jurisprudence of France, the king, as chief suzerain, was entitled to have the prisoners of his vassals delivered up to him upon paying to the captor the value of their ransom according to a graduated scale. The highest ransom was ten thousand francs. Now as Henry VI. of England was also King of France by the treaty of Troyes, a formal demand of the prisoner was made in his name, grounded on this law ; and to avoid all cavil, the highest ransom was offered.

\* Vol. i. pp. 9, 11.



"And although the capture of that woman is not like that of a king or prince or other person of great estate, whom the king would be entitled to have from any vassal for the price of 10,000 francs, according to the custom of France, yet our Lord the King offers that sum." \* And in addition an annuity for life was promised to the knight who actually took her.

The negotiations for her surrender were spread over months, but at length she was formally delivered into the hands of the officers of the King of England. While she was with the Burgundians, she seems to have been treated as a prisoner of war, with honour and humanity, and from the wife and aunt of John of Luxembourg she received such kindness that she afterwards declared that if human influence could have prevailed upon her to change her male garb, she would have done it at the exhortation of those ladies.† Yet it

*and is at  
length deli-  
vered up.*

\* Vol. i. p. 14.

† "Procès," vol. i. p. 96.

*Her leap  
from the  
tower of  
Beaurevoir.*

was during that period that she was guilty of the first formal disobedience to her voices in a desperate attempt to effect her escape. In her extreme dread of falling into the hands of the English, she sprang from the top of a high tower at the Castle of Beaurevoir, contrary to their command. She said she could not help it.\* She felt dizzy from the leap, but, strange to say, unhurt, and was carried back into the castle insensible.

What she feared so much had now come to pass, and she was in very different hands from those of the ladies of Beaurevoir. They brought her to Rouen in chains, and cast her into a cell, where she was pinioned to the wall by iron fetters on her hands and feet, and three English men-at-arms were set to guard her day and night.

*Preparations  
for her trial.*

In the meantime the preparations for her

\* This simple expression for a strong impulse was afterwards made one of the grounds of charge against her: "In quo male sentire videtur de libertate humani arbitrii et incidere in errorem illorum qui," etc. etc.—"Procès," vol. i. p. 260.

trial were slowly proceeding. Commissioners were sent into her own country to take depositions as to her early life and habits. These depositions were evidently too favourable to her. Some idle rumours were gathered, such as that she had been at one time a servant at an inn and there learned the management of horses and the use of arms—a statement which, though shown to be without foundation, was afterwards reproduced by Monstrelet, and copied from him by Hume; some simple calumnies, such as a gross charge in reference to De Baudricourt; some vague accusations of superstition in connection with the fairy tree. But all these were felt to be worthless, and the depositions were suppressed in the record. Joan was indicted and condemned out of her own lips.

The Cardinal of Winchester, the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Warwick, the tutor *Assembly of her enemies in Rouen.* of the young king, assembled in Rouen for the trial. Their all-powerful influence was felt at every stage, but of their presence the pub-

lished proceedings give no trace. There came also from Paris many doctors of high repute, but all strong partisans. The See of Rouen was then vacant, but territorial jurisdiction for the trial was obtained, but with some difficulty, from the vicar-capitular and chapter of Rouen. When the first public session was held in the Royal Chapel of the castle of Rouen, on the 21st of February 1431, the bishop sat with no less than forty-two assessors—viz., fifteen doctors of theology, five doctors of civil and canon law, seven bachelors in theology, eleven bachelors in canon law and four licentiates in civil law. When the court sat, a formal citation was delivered to the apparitor to be served upon Joan in her prison. In his return to this writ the apparitor relates two requests which she made at the time of citation : first, that ecclesiastics of the side of France as well as those of the side of England might sit upon her trial ; and secondly, that she might be permitted to hear Mass. The first request was passed over in silence ; the second was re-

*Her two requests.*

fused, "in consideration of the crimes of which she is accused and the deformity of the garb in which she perseveres." She was then brought before the tribunal, and an oath tendered to her, to answer truly to whatsoever should be demanded of her. But she peremptorily refused to take the oath in that form. She would answer fully, she said, as to her own acts ; but as to her revelations from God, she had confided them to no one but Charles, "whom she calls her king," nor would she to any other if her head were to be cut off. She ultimately took the oath to answer concerning matters of faith, reserving to herself the right not to answer as to the secrets of her revelations. She was then minutely examined before the full court of assessors for five successive days. At the end of that period the bishop resolved, for reasons which we may divine, that her further examination should be conducted in the prison in the presence of four or five persons selected by himself. She was accordingly for six days

*She is examined in public,*

*and in the prison.*

*Her answers.*

further, and generally twice a day, sifted in the prison by these special examiners, astute and practised men. It is hard to describe the effect the perusal of these examinations leaves upon the mind, or what an impression it gives of her uprightness and good sense, her simplicity, her piety and humility, and her unshaken faith in the reality of her own inspirations. "I believe," she said, "firmly, and as firmly as I believe the Christian faith, and that God redeemed us from the pains of hell, that my voices came from God and by His ordinance."\* Her voices, she said, had been with her from the beginning, and she had always obeyed them except when she leaped from the tower of Beaurevoir. They were still daily communing with her in her cell, and telling her to answer boldly to her questioners. Her accusers put to her the mystery hidden from man, and asked her if she was in a state of grace. "If I am," she answered, "may God keep me in it ; if I am

\* Vol. i. p. 63.



not, may God put me in it.\* I would grieve more than for the whole world, if I knew that I were not." Yet she added, that she did not believe that, if she were in mortal sin, St. Catherine and St. Margaret would come to her.

She was asked why, if she were not in sin, she confessed so often. "One can never," she said, "cleanse one's conscience too much."

She was asked if St. Catherine and St. Margaret hated the English. "They hate what God hates, and love what God loves."

"Does God then hate the English?" "Of the love or hatred which God bears to the English, or what he means to do to their souls, I know nothing; but I know that they will all be driven forth of the realm of France, except those who will die there."

She was accused of having prevented peace. "No," she said; "I did all in my power to

\* "Interrogata an sciat quod ipsa sit in gratiâ Dei, respondit, 'Si ego non sim, Deus ponat me, et si ego sim, Deus me teneat in illâ. Ego essem magis dolens de toto mundo, si ego scirem me non esse in gratiâ Dei,'"—*"Procès,"* vol. i. p. 263.

make peace with the Duke of Burgundy ; but as to the English, the peace to be made with them is, that they go back to their own country of England." \*

She was asked whether she had placed more confidence in her banner or her sword : " My trust," she said, " was neither in sword nor banner, but was wholly in God."

She was asked if she had not sinned in leaving her father and mother against their wish. She said that if she had offended therein, they had forgiven her ; that in all things else she had obeyed them, but that in this she was bound to obey God rather than them, and if she had a hundred fathers and mothers, and were the daughter of a king, she would have done likewise.

Yet (for the truth must be told†) it is evident

\* "Quantum ad ducem Burgundiæ ipsa requisivit eum per litteras et suos ambaxiatores, quod esset pax inter regem suum et dictum ducem, quantum vero ad Anglicos, pax quam oportet ibi esse est quod vadant ad patriam suam in Angliâ " (vol. i. p. 233).

† See Note at the end of this Essay.

that on one point Joan was guilty of prevarication. She had, as we said, refused at the beginning to take the oath to answer simply everything which was asked of her ; for she apprehended that questions might be put to her which she could not lawfully answer ; and this determination she persisted in throughout, although at the commencement of every examination the same scene was repeated of extreme importunity on the part of her examiners to induce her to take the oath without restriction. Now, amongst other subjects upon which she was closely pressed, was the sign she had given to Charles VII., by which he recognised her divine mission. That sign consisted, as we have seen, of the revelation to him of his doubts as to his legitimacy, and of his secret prayer. With Joan's feelings towards the king, she would sooner have died than publish such a thing to the world. Accordingly, for many days she met the question with a simple refusal to answer. " You will not," she said, " extract

*Her story of  
the angel.*

that from my lips." \* Her examiners having still returned to it the more eagerly on that account, she at last cried out, "Would you wish me to perjure myself?" † and immediately after, as if seeing there was no escape, she commenced a story about an angel having brought from Heaven a crown of gold and jewels, and placed it on the king's head in the hall of Chinon. An endeavour has been made to explain this as an allegory; and that she herself was the angel who brought to the king the crown of France. Surely it is simpler to say with Joan herself afterwards on the point of death, ‡ that it was fiction in which, tortured as she was, she took refuge—a fiction, not a

\* "Interrogata quale signum dedit regi suo quod ipsa veniebat ex parte Dei respondit: Ego semper vobis respondi quod non mihi extrahetis illud ab ore" (vol. i. p. 91).

† "Essetis vos contenti quod ego incurrerem perjurium?" (vol. i. p. 139).

‡ To the Friar Martin L'Advenu:—"Dixit et confessa fuit quod, quidquid dixisset et se jactasset de dicto angelo, nullus tamen fuerat angelus qui dictam coronam appor-tasset" (vol. i. p. 479). [This is from the posthumous Acts which the Secretaries refused to sign.]

perjury, for it was expressly excluded from the compass of her oath.

The great point upon which she was urged was her assumption of male attire contrary to a canon of the early Church; but this she said she had done, because she was so commanded from on high.\* In one matter they were more successful in ensnaring her—that of submission to the Church. They asked her would she submit the truth to the decision of the Church. She said she referred herself to God and His holy angels. They told her it was not to the Church triumphant, but to the Church militant, that she was required to submit. It is evident that she construed their meaning to be, that she should submit her

*She is required to submit to the Church.*

\* She prayed fervently, she said, for light as to the relinquishment of this dress, and she gives the words of her prayer: "Tres doulx Dieu en l'onneur de vostre sainte passion, je vous requier, si vous me aimés que vous me revelés comment je oy respondre à ces gens d'Englise. Je sçay bien quant a l'abit le commandement comment je l'ay prins. Mais je ne sçay point par quelle manière je doy le laisser Pour ce plaise vous à moy l'enseigner."—"Procès," vol. i. p. 279.

*Her appeal  
to the Pope.*

revelations to them, her judges, by whom she knew she was prejudged, and she refused to make the required submission. Yet, even in that her deep sense of faith pointed out at last the true solution ; and she said when she was brought out to receive sentence : “ I appeal to God and to our Lord the Pope.” “ We cannot go so far as to seek the Pope,” cried the Bishop of Beauvais ; “ every ordinary is judge in his own diocese.”\* Her voices, she said, promised her salvation, but conditionally upon her preserving her virginity of body and soul. They also promised her deliverance from her enemies, but in what way she knew not ; but for the most part, they said, it would be through a great victory ; and they said to her :

\* “ Interrogata utrum velit revocare omnia dicta et facta sua quæ sunt reprobata per clericos : respondet : ‘ Ego me refero Deo, et Domino nostro Papæ ’—et fuit sibi dictum quod hoc non sufficebat et quod non poterat fieri quod iretur quæsitum Dominum nostrum Papam ita remoté ; etiam quod ordinarii erant judices quilibet in sua diœcesi ” (vol. i. p. 445). The disallowing of this appeal seems to have been the grossest piece of illegality connected with the trial.



“ Take all patiently, neither be solicitous concerning thy martyrdom ; thou shalt come finally into the kingdom of Paradise.” And she called it martyrdom for the pain and adversity which she endures in the prison ; and she knows not whether she shall suffer yet greater pains, but she commits herself to God.\*

Out of her answers were culled carefully such as were conceived to tell against her ; and these were digested into twelve articles, which were sent for the opinion of the University of Paris. The opinion of that body, whose sentiments we have seen, could not be long doubtful. They condemned the propositions sent to them as blasphemous and heretical ; and soon after the answer came back, Joan was formally condemned in a full assembly of the assessors, and on the morrow

*\* Articles sent to Paris.*

*Her condemnation.*

\* “ Et ut plurimum voces ei dixerunt quod ipsa liberabitur per magnam victoriam : et postea dicunt sibi ipsæ voces, ‘ Capias totum gratanter : non cures de martyrio tuo : tu venies finaliter in regnum Paradisi ’ . . . Et vocat illud martyrium pro pœna et adversitate quam patitur in carcere, et nescit utrum majorem pœnam patietur sed de hoc se refert Deo.”—“ Procès,” vol. i. p. 155.

of Pentecost, in the year 1431, was led out to receive the doom of a sorceress and an apostate.

*Her retrac-  
tation and  
sentence.*

In this dreadful trial she seems to have been abandoned to her own strength. She had faced death a hundred times in the field with perfect calmness, but this chalice was of another kind. That agony of fear of death, which sometimes assails the finest natures, overcame her, and she shrank from the faggot and the fierce flame. "Give me," she said, "I will sign a retraction." So a paper was put into her hands to sign, by which she declared herself misled by her voices, and renounced the use of her male attire.\* She was sentenced, as a merciful commutation, to perpetual imprisonment, with bread and water. This sentence she ought legally to have undergone in the ecclesiastical prison; but the Bishop of Beauvais gave her up again to the English, who led her back to her old cell.

And now we may ask one question. A full

\* See Note at the end of this Essay.

twelvemonth had elapsed since she had been taken prisoner: what did her king, Charles VII., do for her during that time?—did he make a single effort to save her who had given him back his crown and kingdom? He had the wealth of cities which she had won for him—he might have offered to ransom her, so long at least as she was in Burgundian hands. He had many noble captives, prisoners of her victories; he might have offered them in exchange, or justly threatened their lives if a hair of her head were injured. Or if everything else failed, ought he not to have put himself at the head of the chivalry of France, and marched to rescue her or perish? History has to relate, beyond all recorded ingratitude, that he made no sign, did not even speak one word on her behalf. On the contrary, there is the clearest evidence that the coterie around him were filled with base satisfaction at getting rid of her, and probably looked to her death almost as eagerly as the English. As for Charles, his feeling was not *that*, but was

*Ingratitude  
of Charles  
VII.*

simple indifference. He was enslaved to ignoble pleasures ; and what can be more dead to gratitude or duty than the heart of a voluptuary ? It was of Agnes Sorel\* that he thought, and not of the pure maiden Joan. Yet she never dreamed of reproaching him ; throughout her trial she remained full of loyalty, as enthusiastic and tender as when she knelt at his feet at Chinon or at Rheims. In the very sermon which was preached to her at her condemnation, she bore in silence all that was said against herself, but when the preacher called her king a heretic and a schismatic, she arose and reprimanded him, and said that her king was the noblest of Christians, and the truest to the faith and to the Church.

*Resolution of  
the English  
to destroy  
her.*

She was now condemned to perpetual imprisonment ; but the English never meant to be so baulked of their prey. What care they had of her we can judge from one circumstance. During the course of her trial she became seriously ill. The Earl of Warwick summoned

\* See Note at the end.

the best physician in Rouen, and told him to attend her well. "For," said he, "my king has bought her dear, and holds her dear, and would not on any account that she died a natural death, or otherwise than by the hands of justice at the stake." \* What plot was laid to bring to pass the tragedy which ensued will never be fully known. One witness said, that her woman's clothes which she had adopted in obedience to her sentence, were taken away from her during the night and her male attire alone left beside her, so that she had no choice but to assume it. And this is highly credible, for having at her retractation finally abjured the garb of a man, how else, except by the order of her keepers, did she come by it? That she was found in her dungeon a few days after in her male dress is unquestionable, and this was seized on as conclusive evidence of

\* "*Quia pro nullo rex volebat quod sua morte naturali moreretur, rex enim eam habebat caram, et care emerat nec volebat quod obiret nisi cum justitia et quod esset combusta.*"—Deposition of the Physician De Camera, vol. iii. p. 51.



*She repents  
of her retrac-  
tation,*

her obstinacy and relapse. It must, however, be added, that she plainly repented of and recalled her abjuration, and when the bishop and some of the officials visited her in prison, she declared openly that she had sinned in denying her revelations, and asserted that her voices were from God. And then the bishop told the Earl of Warwick to be of good cheer, for that all was finished. This was upon Sunday. On Tuesday the Bishop of Beauvais summoned the judges once more, and on Wednesday morning a good friar, Martin l'Advenu, was sent to hear her confession, and to announce to her that she was that day to be led out and burned. She was overcome with anguish, not so much at the thought of death, as of the dreadful death she was to die. But she recovered herself, made her confession humbly, and implored to receive the Sacrament, which was not denied her. When she was led forth, weeping, she once more beheld her judges sitting cold and stern. She saw the pitying faces of the people, and the fierce

*and is led  
out for final  
sentence.*



eyes of the English soldiery as they stood in arms around the pile where she was to suffer. "Ah, Bishop, Bishop," said she to the Bishop of Beauvais, "I die through you ; if you had put me in the prison of the Church, and given me fit keepers, this would not have befallen me." When her sentence was about to be read she fell on her knees, invoking God and the Blessed Virgin, St. Michael, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret, and she asked of all to pray for her ; and from her judges, from the bishop, and all, she implored that they would say a Mass for her soul. Every one was melted to tears, except some of the brutal soldiery, who cried out : "Come, priests, make haste ! do you mean to keep us here till dinner-time ?" Her sentence was then read, and she was handed over to the executioner. She asked for a cross, and a soldier, breaking a staff in two, made a rude cross, and gave it to her. Such as it was, she pressed it to her bosom, but she implored that a crucifix should be brought, that it might be held before her eyes

when she was dying. There was a high scaffold erected, and the faggots placed on the top, that her death might be visible to all, and that being once lit from below, it might be out of the power of the executioner to abridge her torture. "Oh, Rouen, Rouen!" she cried, "am I then here to die! I fear that thou wilt suffer through my death." This, then, was the deliverance which her voices had promised her. Her confessor ascended the scaffold with her, comforting her and exhorting her. When she was bound to the stake, and the fire applied below, she uttered a cry; but still, thoughtful for others rather than herself, she implored of her confessor, whose zeal made him still remain near her, to go down, as he might be in danger.\* She then said: "Whether I have done well or ill, my king is free from blame."

*Her death.*

When the flames first touched her she shuddered, and asked for holy water; but as they gathered round her, she cried out, "My

\* Dep. de Martin l'Advenu, t. iii. p. 169.

voices have not deceived me, my voices were from God."\* From that time forth she uttered no word except the name of that Saviour which she had once inscribed upon her banner of victory, and with that holy name upon her lips she expired.

Her work was not the less accomplished. She said she had come to drive the English forth from France, and she did so. Their power continued to dwindle day by day. She said boldly on her trial that before seven years would pass, the English would receive a greater blow than the fall of Orleans ; and in six years after that time King Charles entered Paris.

It would be a matter of interest, if space permitted, to trace in some degree the fate which her memory has undergone ; how it was long obscured and defaced by forgetfulness and calumny ; to say something of

\* "Usque ad finem vitæ suæ manutenuit et asseruit quod voces quas habuerat erant a Deo . . . nec credebatur per easdem voces fuisse deceptam."—Dep. de Martin l'Advenu, t. iii. p. 170.

that drama which reflects so faithfully the passions of her enemies, and which bears unworthily the name of Shakespeare ; something also of that crowning disgrace to France—that composition where profanity vies with ribald indecency, and which bears most worthily the name of Voltaire. That work was worthy of the eighteenth century and its patriarch ; but the nineteenth has other thoughts. France has returned to do homage to her heroine. Those whose principles lead them to deny any miraculous intervention in human affairs, yet place her in the first rank amongst wondrous human creatures ; and we may say that almost every inquirer who has combined high intelligence with faith, has come to avow himself a believer in the truth of her divine mission. Where the Church has not pronounced, each one is of course left to his private judgment upon the evidence. We may, if it so seems to us, conclude that all this wonder—this undeniable history of an unlettered child, who, in her obscure hamlet,

not only declares herself commissioned from on high to deliver her country, but from the beginning details with luminous precision the means by which that deliverance was to be effected ; who, in the accomplishment of her task, was enabled at once to recognise those whom she had never seen, and to reveal secrets known to no mortal ; whose prophecies of future events are attested by evidence which defies doubt ; and who in the command of armies showed the skill of a captain of thirty years' experience—that it is all explicable upon natural principles of enthusiasm and delusion. We may, if we are of the class that can repose contentedly in words and abstractions instead of realities, name her the impersonation of the soul of France, and even (*her* the most devoted to her king and to his nobles !) the herald of the triumph of democracy and of the rising of the Gaul against the Frank and Norman. We may recur for an explanation to the modern miracles of mesmerism and spiritualism. Or we may,

upon the whole, deem it the simpler solution to say that in a great crisis in which the whole future of the balanced commonwealth of Christian Europe, and with it the peace and freedom of the Church, were imperilled, the Arm which had of old sent forth a shepherd-boy for the salvation of Israel was not shortened, and once more raised up the weak ones of this world to confound the strong. If Joan was not, as she averred, sent from God to save her perishing country, history has no such marvel and no such problem.

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## NOTE

(Referred to at pp. 80, 86, and 88)

THE most important addition to the historical materials of which an account is given in the opening pages of this Essay is the publication by M. Pierre Lanéry d'Arc, in the year 1889, of *Actes et Consultations en faveur de Jeanne d'Arc*, consisting chiefly of the written consultations of the theologians who in 1455 examined her sentence of condemnation by order of Pope Callixtus III. The *Recollectio*, or summing up of these consultations, by Jean Bréhal, the Inquisitor for France, concludes by saying that the process, both as to matter and form, contains "manifest injustice."

These theologians do not admit that Joan was guilty of prevarication in the circumstances described at page 81, as may be seen at page 459 of the work just referred to.

There is no doubt that a gross fraud was committed in extorting the pretended retractation mentioned at page 86. This point is fully discussed by a recent writer, the Rev. Francis M. Wyndham, "The Maid of Orleans, her Life and Mission," pp. 25-30.

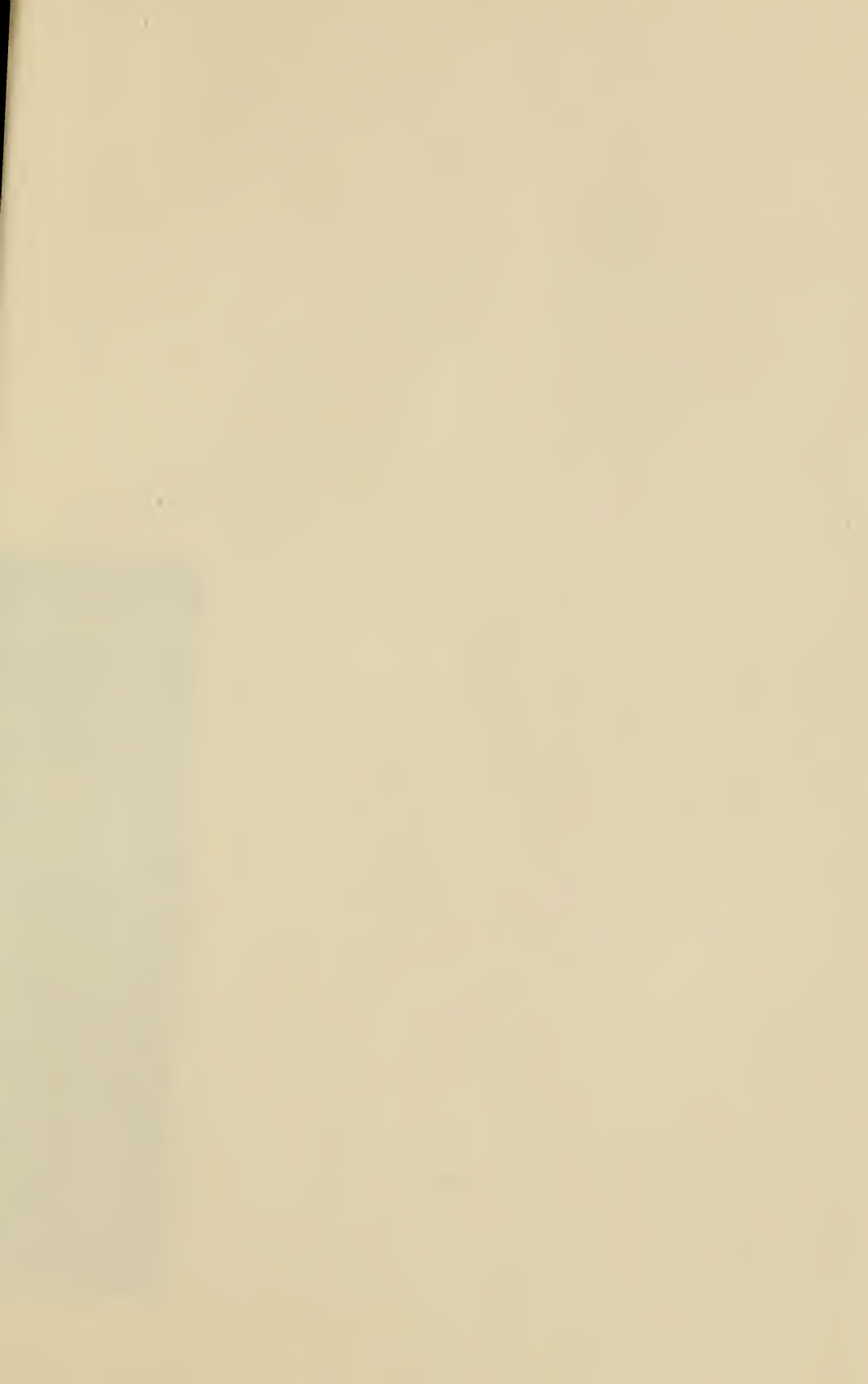
The enemies of La Pucelle were the enemies also of their own country and of the Holy See: they sided with the English, and they were soon after prominent at the schismatical Council of Bâle.

The allusion to Agnes Sorel at page 88 is inconsistent with the fact which seems to be established that she did not come to the French Court till fifteen years after the struggle with the English was over. See De la Marche's *Guerre aux Erreurs Historiques*, page 39.

The Cause of the heroine's Beatification is making good progress at Rome. One of the latest writers on the subject is Father J. B. J. Ayroles, S.J., author of *La Pucelle devant l'Eglise de son Temps* (Paris 1890), and more recently *Jeanne d'Arc sur les Autels et la Régénération de la France*."



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